

REDEEMING GRACE

DISPLAYED

TO THE

CHIEF of SINNERS;

Being a short Account of God's Dealings with

THOMAS TAYLOR.

Likewise a little Account of his Travels and Labours in preaching the Gospel.

*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation,
Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of
whom I AM CHIEF. Tim. i. 15.*

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L E E D S :

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M.DCC.LXXXI.

To the Rev. Mr. J. W E S L E Y.

Honoured and dear Sir,

THE profit which I have found in reading the lives of experienced Christians, makes me the readier comply with your request, of selecting a few memoirs of my own unworthy life; hoping it may be of as great use to some simple souls, as things of a like nature have been to me.

I am aware how hard it is for any one to write his own history; as there are many things, which would have a far better grace, were they to come from another hand; which, nevertheless, are needful to be related. Again, there are several things which one would wish to have buried in oblivion; and yet, an ingenuous mind cannot pass them over. As the latter is really my case, it made me the more reluctant in publishing my own folly.

I am, &c.

Nov. 1, 1779.

THOMAS TAYLOR.

A N
A C C O U N T
O F T H E
L I F E
O F
Mr. THOMAS TAYLOR.

I WAS born, Nov. 11, 1738, in the parish of Rothwell, near Leeds, in Yorkshire. I was the youngest of eight children, seven of whom were sons, and the eldest a daughter; so that I was a *seventh s.n.* My father had something considerable to begin the world with; but proving unfortunate in business, he brought his family into a low condition; especially the younger part, which fell particularly on me who was the youngest of all by six years: I have heard much spoke in praise of my mother; but she died before I was a year old, which I apprehend was no small loss to me. I can but just remember my father, so that I was bereaved of both father and mother, before I was six years of age. I then fell into the hands of a step-mother for some time, who took care of me, as if I had been her own child. I had, pretty early, something of a turn for learning. My father and mother being Presbyterians, I got the Assembly's Catechism off by heart, when I was

but four years old, and said it to the Minister. I had some visits from the divine Spirit very early ; but having no one to encourage me they wore off. My natural temper was active, wild, and very mischievous ; and I was so known an offender in little unlucky pranks, that I have often suffered, though not guilty : for when the real delinquent could not be found out, the saddle was laid upon my back. Being of a turbulent, daring cast, I often, when very little, ran myself into great dangers by climbing up into high trees, and by many others things of a like kind. When I was between five and six years of age, as I was walking by the river *Calder*, and trying how near the edge I could go, the ground gave way, and I fell in where it was very deep. My father, and some other men were at a little distance, and heard my cries as I fell in. They ran to me, and soon got me out, and found I was not much worse. I often rambled away, even at that age, so that nobody knew where I was ; and, being frequently pinched with hunger, I sometimes stole fruit. Indeed I often rambled so far that I knew not where I was ; and sometimes I had played some unlucky pranks, and was afraid to return home. One day, being in my wandering humour, I got to a large farm-house, and being fauntring about, a large, fierce bull-dog ran at me, seized me, and got me down, but only tore my clothes ; how I was delivered I know not, for I do not remember any one near. Being seven years of age, I contracted the abominable habit of cursing and swearing, which never left me till I was brought to know myself. Being of a passionate temper, (Oh, could I write it in tears of blood !) I frequently blasphemed in a most dreadful manner ; nor did I stick at lying : yet, young as I was, I was not without checks from God, and had I been under the care of any that knew
how

how to manage me, it might have prevented many years of horrid impiety.

When between nine and ten years of age, my eldest brother took me; designing I should be brought up to his business, *viz.* a Clothier. Nothing could have been more detestable to me. I abhorred the name of a Clothier: yea, I heartily despised both him and his trade. This being the case, I was not very studious to please him, which brought, what I thought, hard usage upon me, and after some time, I determined to decamp. But the query was, Whither should I go? This I knew not; for though I had several relations in good circumstances, yet I knew I should meet with a cold reception from any of them, when they knew I had run away from my brother. Nevertheless, being determined not to stay, my resolution was to go somewhere. One morning, having done something amiss, rather by accident than design, I expected to meet with correction; and, to avoid it, set out fasting, about the middle of November. It was a hard frost, and I was in poor habit, having on the worst clothes I had. I wandered all that day, not knowing, (nor indeed much caring) what would become of me. I was very hungry, and sorely pinched with cold. I picked the hops from the hedge, and about eight o'clock at night came to another brother's house, eight or nine miles from where I set out in the morning. When I came there, though I was cold and hungry, I durst not for some time go in, as I was not in the dress of a visiter. However, at last I ventured in, and my reception was far more agreeable than I expected; the next day I was treated civilly, so that I began to hope that I was to stay there. But, alas! on the third day, I was escorted back to my former quarters, though

much against my inclination. Nevertheless, I determined to make my escape again the first opportunity; which in a fortnight after I effected. I remembered, my nurse used to shew great fondness for me, I therefore set out and marched thither, about nine or ten miles off, in the same garb in which I had fled before. Though I was received tolerably well, yet my dress shewed me to be a runaway; so that they were at a loss how to treat me. This was not far from that brother's house where I fled before, to whom I now paid another visit; but here I was treated roughly, and in a few days was, by main force, conducted back to the place from whence I came. Yet, I was determined not to stay there: But I thought I should succeed better, if I could decamp in a better dress; therefore I considered how to get some of my better clothes. I got a quantity of them together, and resolved to march by night, seeing there was no probability of doing it by day. This was a pretty daring attempt for a boy of ten years old. But the clothes were found before night, and the cause suspected, for which I underwent a severe beating. This was one of the worst methods which could have been taken; for it only confirmed my resolution not to stay. I then thought the likeliest way to effect my escape would be to go on a Sunday, when trimmed up on my best fashion. This I therefore resolved upon, and accordingly I put on two shirts that I might have a change; but unfortunately it was discovered as soon as I came down stairs, so that I was ordered to strip, and underwent again a severe discipline. I was now a pretty close prisoner, and especially on Sundays. However, one Sunday, being equipt in my best, I waited all day for the opportunity, but could not get my hat: Finding that to be the case, I set out bare-headed, and ran for life; determining that night to go to my

my nurse's, and then to ramble where I should not be known. I got thither, and was vastly pleased with myself, thinking, now I should gain my utmost desire ; but while I sat by the fire, who should come riding to the door but my brother, who had taken horse and pursued me, and though it was now night, yet some people had taken notice while it was day-light, of a strange boy going in great haste without a hat : By this means he easily guessed where I was gone. Well ; back again I was brought ; but with as fixed a resolution as ever that I would not stay. Being now almost a close prisoner, I was kept in mean habit ; but that was nothing to me. A day or two after Christmas-day, I made my final escape. And now I entered upon a scene of distress indeed ! What I endured from hunger and cold, no one knows but myself. My case was singular : I had relations living in affluence, on the right hand and on the left, while I should have been glad of the fragments which their servants, yea, perhaps, their dogs despised. That winter was particularly severe, and it was just the depth thereof. My friends thought to starve me back again to my eldest brother ; but I had an unconquerable aversion both to him and his trade. I would just remark here, the impropriety of fixing boys to any business so much against their inclinations.

Finding nothing could make me submit to return to my eldest brother, the other, to whose house I first fled, took me, and after some time put me out to a business that I less disliked, though not quite to my liking. Indeed my genius turned more for learning ; but as I could not have my wish, I was willing to comply.

As I grew up, my habits of sin multiplied, and my mouth was fraught with oaths, lies, and deceit. I loved sinful recreations and foolish pastimes to an immoderate excess, and soon became a pretty dexterous gambler, especially at cards: And having much pride and little money, was the more intent upon furnishing myself that way. I wished to associate with those whose circumstances were better than my own, and strove to equal them in dress and every thing else. During this time, the Spirit of God was not wanting to call me, and sometimes good resolutions took place for a season; but no sooner did a horse-race, or party of pleasure offer itself, than my resolutions died away, and I was worse again than ever: Yet I read the Bible, and got much light into many things. I knew I had not faith, and when at church (for I went to church sometimes) I durst not repeat the creed; for I knew I was no believer, and though I could lie at other times, I would not lie there. I likewise knew that I was not born again; but what the *new birth* was I knew not; nor had I any to tell me. I knew I was far from being what I ought to be, but I thought I would be better when I was a little older.

When I was about seventeen, I heard that eminent servant of God, Mr. *Whitfield*. The first sight of his countenance struck me. There was an immense multitude, and his voice was like a trumpet. His text was, Rom. xiii. 11. *It is high time to awake out of sleep*. The whole of the discourse was attended with an amazing power, I believe to many: I am sure it was so to me. When he addressed himself to the several ages of the large congregation before him, and among the rest, to the young people; *that* took great hold on me. I did not observe any thing extraordinary in what he said;

said ; but there was such an unction in his word as I had never felt before. I went home full of good resolutions, *now* to break off all my bad practices. But, alas ! this also proved *as the morning cloud !* I was surrounded by such as were utterly abandoned : So I soon returned with the dog to his vomit. Nay, I was worse than ever ; till happening to read the Pilgrim's Progress, I had another powerful visit from the Lord. But that also stayed but a short time, for my passions hurried me on with a surprizing impetuosity. I now left off attending any place of worship, and gave full scope to every wretched disposition. I had a brother living at some distance, who had been awakened some time. But I had long taken my leave of him, as his conversation did not at all suit my inclination. I used to wrangle with him as well as I could, yet it generally left an impression upon my mind. But now, I never came near him, being wholly taken up with things of another kind. In the midst of my career I was very miserable ; and when I was among my jovial companions, and saw every one around all joy and gladness, I was often exceedingly melancholy and dejected, though I assumed an air of cheerfulness. And often have I lain down in great terror with a " perhaps I may " awake in hell ? " A whim now came into my head to go into the army. And a party of horse being at this time recruiting in *Wakefield*, and an acquaintance of mine entering himself a volunteer, I needed but little solicitation to follow his steps. I therefore went to the Officer, and being young and pretty well made, was very acceptable. But upon trial, I was about half an inch beneath the standard, and therefore he could not take me.

This gave a check to my career in some measure, but I soon returned to my former conduct,
abandoned

abandoned to every thing my age and circumstances could admit of. I cannot say that drinking had much influence over me ; yet I have been intoxicated several times ; and once, not long before I was awakened, and coming home in the night with others, we had a ferry to cross ; while the boat was coming, being bereaved of my senses, I stumbled, and had it not just then come to shore I should have tumbled into the water, and in all likelihood have been lost eternally. However, I took my leave of getting drunk, and do not remember *that* sin ever took me captive since. Nevertheless, in other respects I was as bad as ever, nay, even worse ; for as I was now grown up, my habits of sin were stronger and more enlarged. As I had given up going to any place of worship, so I had in a good measure dropped my reading too. But still my conscience was not quite asleep ; I had very uneasy moments. But I ran into wild company and diversions as soon as I could ; and it was a mercy that I had not more money, for that would have added fuel to the fire ; and though nothing is impossible with God, yet in all human probability, I should never have been saved. Thus lay my poor soul in ruins, when in the beginning of the year 1758, the Lord, by a kind chain of providences, was pleased to arrest me in my full career of sin.

There was a young man with whom I had been a companion for several years : he had been in a fever, and during his illness had been awakened and had contracted an acquaintance with the Independents. He persuaded me one Sunday to go hear his Minister ; to oblige him I went. The text was, *They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.* While the Preacher was describing the maladies of a sick soul, several drunken men

men came in, and were very rude. Partly with what the Minister said, and partly by being struck with their behaviour, I never felt myself so affected in all my life. I plainly saw there must be a change, or I was undone for ever. Yet I cannot say that I was under such terror as might have been expected from so stubborn a sinner. The usual temptation awaited me when I came home; nor did I wholly escape free. But my desires and convictions continued all that week, and on Sunday I went to the same place of worship again; and I now plainly saw I must give up my companions or I could not be saved. But here was a difficulty: though very young, I had contracted an acquaintance with a girl, who was as thoughtless as myself. Being brought up in the same neighbourhood, a fondness had insensibly stole upon us both. But however, as I was determined to save my soul, and as she had a perfect antipathy to every thing of the kind, it was not long before I got disentangled: so that snare was also broken.

I now began to cry unto God in private, but was sorely tempted the first time I went to my knees. I was afraid, either I should drop down dead, or the devil would appear to me, if not take me away. I frequently thought satan was behind me when I was praying, and was afraid to open my eyes lest I should see him. Indeed it is an exercise the devil does not love, and which he will use every means to prevent. I began now to contract an acquaintance with the people of the meeting, and was pretty much taken notice of by them. Several of them had been joined with the Methodists, and gave such an account of them, that I had no desire of being acquainted with them. One Methodist lived near me, and had a public meeting at his house every Sunday evening, to which I
sometimes

sometimes went. He was useful to me, and might have been more so; but being more attached to the other people, I kept company with them only. *Alleine's Alarm** now fell into my hands. It described my case as exactly as if it had been wrote on purpose; so that I prized it above rubies. I began to have visits from the Lord, exceeding sweet to my soul; but no one said, "Now believe and thou shalt be saved;" so that I was like *Samuel*, I knew not the voice of the Lord. I began now to meet with a good deal of opposition; my acquaintance laughed me to scorn, though whenever they came near me, the Lord opened my mouth in such a manner, that I could easily put them to silence. My master (for I was not yet out of my time) was sour and much out of humour at times. He, and others, whom I was in some measure under, had no objection to a reformation in me; but now they supposed I was as mad one way as I had been the other. I continued to press forward, and the Lord continued to visit me with tastes of his love, which were exceeding precious to me. The time of *Wakefield* races drew on: many expected my religion would be at an end, as they knew how passionately fond I was of those lying vanities; and indeed I was not without fear myself, not that I found the least inclination to any thing of the kind, yet I knew not how it might be when the time came. But God took care of that; that fear was of his planting, and was a means of driving me nearer to himself.

One Lord's day evening, I was retired to my apartment for my usual exercise of reading and prayer. While I was calling upon the Lord, he

* This most useful book is now reprinted, and may be had of Mr. R. Spence, bookseller in York.

appeared in a wonderful manner, as with his vesture dipt in blood. I saw him hanging on the cross, and the sight caused such love to flow into my soul, that I believed that moment, and never since gave up my confidence. I had not then any particular promise applied; but was enabled to cast my soul upon that atoning Sacrifice, which I saw was made for my offences. I had nothing to trust in but that blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel. But,

Oh, the rapturous height,
Of that holy delight,
Which I found in the life-giving blood;
Of my Saviour posselt,
I was perfectly blest,
As if fill'd with the fulness of God!

As I had no one near to tell them what God had done for my soul, I was in a short time brought into doubts: but yet I could not give up my confidence. Some time after the two following scriptures came to me with remarkable power: *I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly*, John x. 10. and again, Rev. xx. 6. *Blessed and holy is he who hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death shall have no power.* These two testimonies were indeed words in season, and very precious to my soul. I had some difficulties soon after to grapple with, and at times was brought to a low ebb; but still his grace was sufficient. I often thought if I was to live at *Leeds*, where there were such plenty of means, it would be almost as the gate of heaven to me: and in particular, I expected great assistance from the fellowship of those who were strong in grace. But God would have me depend on

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himself

himself alone; for though I went to *Leeds*, as I was of a shy disposition, I had no fellowship with any one. I was then tempted to think there was not much life there: at least, I found very little. It was a very dull time with me, yet I kept close to God in prayer, and he kept my soul in a measure of peace.

From thence I removed to another place, where there were few that pretended to religion: I feared, lest now I should be overthrown; but I found here two or three Methodists, who had preaching some times. I soon got among them, and often found it a blessing to my soul; particularly once in hearing that plain, honest man, *Paul Greenwood*, whose world left a lasting impression on my mind. But though I met with them at times, yet there was a discord in our manner of speaking, which prevented my close union. From thence I removed to *Wakefield*, where my first religious acquaintance lived, and with whom I had the greatest union. I kept on in much simplicity, watching unto prayer, and still found reading very profitable; as indeed it was from my first setting out.

But now a new scene opened: I began to think I was called to preach: this had in a measure been pressed upon my mind for some time; but whether it was a delusion from Satan, or a call from the Spirit of God, I knew not. I dreaded the thoughts of running before I was sent.

I likewise thought a Preacher should have learning, and I was little more than an English scholar. But, however, the impression grew stronger and stronger. I wanted to recommend my Lord to ruined sinners, and thought I could rejoice if I was tore in pieces for so doing. I had neither ease,
nor

nor honour, nor profit in view; but wanted to be an instrument in God's hands of saving souls. The word of the Lord was as a fire shut up in my bones. At the same time I was so conscious of my inability for the work, that I was ashamed to intimate my thoughts to any one. Oh, how have I agonized with God, not to suffer me to engage in such a work unless it was his will; and if it was, to point out my way? That awful declaration, Rev. xxii. 18, 19. stood seemingly in my way. *For I testify to every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.* It is probable I might understand these words in too general a sense; but however, they seemed as if they pointed out a very narrow path for a gospel Minister to go in; and made me cry out, "Who is sufficient for these things?" But God answered for himself from the first of Jeremiah: *Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. Then said I, Ah, Lord God, behold I cannot speak, for I am a child!* (My very objection!) *But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee, thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces; for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord; then the Lord put forth his hand and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words into thy mouth.* Now, if any passage was ever applied to any one by the Spirit of God, surely this was to me. Therefore I deter-
mined

mined to make the attempt, but still I knew not how to set about it ; for I was ashamed to declare my mind to any one, from a sense of my absolute unfitness for the work. I had never spoken a word in the way of exhortation, but had frequently prayed in public. At length one or two of my acquaintance asked me if I did not think I was called to preach ? With much confusion, I answered in the affirmative. From that time I determined to make an attempt ; but the question was, Where ? At last I resolved to begin on a Sunday evening, and pitched upon a very prophane place to make my first effort ; thinking an ignorant place was the fittest for an ignorant Preacher. When I came within sight of the village, my spirit was ready to sink within me ; not for fear of persecution (tho' the place was rude enough) but from a sense of the importance of the undertaking. When I came to the place, the heart of the honest man who had invited me failed him ; therefore I found his house was shut up. This rather damped me ; but another door being immediately set open, I went in. A house full of people gathered ; I stood up, sung a hymn and prayed, but did not give out a text ; for as I had never before opened my mouth to exhort in public, I did not know whether I could say any thing or no. But I found assistance in giving a word of exhortation, and I believe the word was accompanied with the power of God to many present. I appointed to go again the next Sunday, and then chose Matt. v. 3. for a text. I found life and liberty in speaking, and a blessing attended it. The tidings of my preaching soon reached the congregation where I was a hearer, and happening to have no Preacher the following Lord's-Day, they requested that I would supply the place of one. This was a hard task, for there were several whom I was much afraid to stand up before ; however, I

durst

durst not decline the offer. I spoke from John i. 29. Here again my mouth was opened, and my tongue was loosed, so that they objected nothing : undoubtedly they made allowance for a young, raw speaker. Being now in some measure satisfied that I ought to speak in God's name, I embraced many opportunities of going to several places.

I now wanted to improve my little smattering of learning, and having a trifle of money, I entirely devoted myself to that purpose, not knowing nor caring how I might be disposed of.

After some time, being destitute of a Minister at the place where I was a hearer, they desired I would accept the place ; accordingly, I undertook to preach to them awhile, till we should see a little farther. The congregation was but a small one ; however, I had the satisfaction to see it increase, and some poor sinners were convinced. But some of the leading men having frequently veered about from one system to another, seemed now mightily charmed with Antinomianism. Dr. *Crisp's* and Mr. *Saltmarsh's* works were highly approved of, and some of Dr. *Gill's* writings. But Mr. *Relly* was the great Apostle amongst them, on account of his famous hymn-book ! and his Treatise of the Union of Christ and his Church. He came into the country a few weeks, and by him I was much blinded, and for a time all seemed right which he advanced. But in one particular sermon he explained his sentiments freely, when I was fully satisfied that he had sadly perverted the truth. I went to him the next day, and ventured to object against what he had advanced the preceding night. He was not prepared to answer some things which I had objected, but attempted to puzzle me by starting other questions. I gained but little

satisfaction from this interview ; but still I was rather tinctured with Antinomianism ; yet, I laboured to live near to God, I earnestly begged to be entirely right, both in principle and practice. A particular providence now occasioned my coming among the Methodists : I went one time to hear Mr. *Whitfield*, and a certain Preacher * who was with him, I was informed was to preach the next Lord's-Day ; it came into my mind to hear him, as the time did not interfere with our time of worship. When I went, I was amazingly struck, to find him in a far more evangelical strain than I expected. I had now and then gone to hear the Methodists before, but was generally disgusted. But the present sermon had quite a different effect. I was now more reconciled to the Methodists than I had been, and began to be acquainted with the people. Reprobation was what I never could digest, and I was not without my doubts concerning final Perseverance ; but could not endure to hear it spoken against. But I was most rooted in imputed Righteousness, taking it for granted it was true, because Mr. *Hervy* had wrote in its defence.

About this time, being invited to preach in the Methodist Preaching-house, I accepted the invitation. This gave great offence to my own people, several of whom were run-a-way Methodists. Meantime I began to think of joining the Methodists, which my congregation suspected ; the heads of them met me, and made me some offers in a temporal way. But I told them I thought providence called me to an itinerant life, and wished them to look out for one who might suit them. As I knew few of them would go with me, I recommended Mr. *Ingham's* connexion to them, and wrote to Mr. *Ingham* myself on their behalf. He

* Mr. Hanby.

came, and several of the Preachers in his connexion; but as Mr. *Ingham's* people soon after broke in pieces, the Meeting relapsed into its former state of Independency. Being now disengaged, I preached up and down among the Methodists. But being in principle partly a Calvinist, and having been accustomed to read Calvinian books, their phrases were become very familiar to me. However, I aimed at doing good, and when any of the Preachers were sick, or had any where to go, I readily supplied their place; and I have reason to believe my labour was not in vain.

The summer being arrived, and Mr. *Wesley* coming into the country, I met him at *Bristol*. He received me with that affability and condescension which he is so remarkable for. I heard him preach in several places; but I cannot say that I could cordially receive the doctrine of perfection. As the Conference was drawing near, he advised me to attend it at *London*. I intimated a desire of spending a year in that place, that I might be fully instructed both in the doctrines and discipline of the Methodists. Accordingly I disposed of some small effects which I had, and set out on foot. When I came thither, I expected to have undergone a close examination, with regard to my principles, experience and ability; and therefore, as I did not in every thing agree with Mr. *Wesley*, it was a doubt with me whether I should not be rejected. But to my surprize, I was not asked one question relative to any of these things; but was appointed for *Wales*, and was the only travelling Preacher of our connexion in those parts. This I have sometimes thought was not prudently done, as I was but just come into the connexion. However I set out for *Bristol*, and so into *Wales*; and truly a rough region it was. A Preacher at *Bristol*
said

said to me, " You seem pretty well dressed, and will hold out well enough for a year; but you must expect nothing to buy any more clothes when those are wore out." However, I did not regard that; for I was determined to spend and be spent in doing all the good I could. I therefore began preaching out of doors in the first town I came to, which was *Chepstow*, and determined to do so in every town I came to. Thus I went on till after Christmas, and endured a good deal of hardship from hunger and cold; especially in passing over those dreadful mountains from *Neath* to *Brecon*, on which I travelled a long way, and saw neither house nor field, hedge nor tree; nor yet any living creature, excepting here and there a poor sheep or two, nor scarcely any visible track to know my way by. This was not pleasing to flesh and blood; but still I determined to go on.

In February, there seemed a prospect of much good in a large tract of land called *Gower*, in *Glamorganshire*; the inhabitants of it were nearly heathens. I went down into this miserable country, in very cold, rainy weather: the people flocked to hear, but we were ill provided with convenient places to preach in. Meantime the rain was excessive, and the cold intense, while we had but little fire; so that I frequently put on my wet clothes several days successively, yet without any inconvenience afterwards. Here God blessed my word: I collected several societies, and many were at this time brought to experience the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins.

Towards summer, a circumstance seemed to open my way sixty or seventy miles farther down to *Pembrokeshire*; I went thither, and preached at *Carmarthen* in my way. Afterwards I preached at *Pembroke*,

broke, and had multitudes to hear, who behaved in a respectful manner, and generously cleared all my expences; for at this time there was no provision made for Missionaries. I preached in several places round *Milfordhaven*, and had many to hear. Indeed the prospect was so promising, and the people so loving, that I was almost tempted to embrace their pressing invitations to stay with them. But I thought that would be betraying my trust; so I returned to my own circuit, promising that I would return again after the Conference was over. When I returned into the old circuit I was seized with a slow fever. I believe it was in some measure occasioned by fatigues. But providence was kind to me; for though as I was in a poor place, where little assistance was to be had, by the blessing of God I did without it. Mr. *Mather* then came from *Staffordshire*, to help me to put things into some order, and went with me through the rambling circuit; which indeed has been of use to me in some respects ever since.

I attended the Conference at *Leeds*, in August, 1762, and was sent back into *Pembrokeshire*. But though I had three hundred miles to ride, and a new work to begin, I had nothing allowed me either to take me thither, or support me when I got there. But of this I took no care; and through a kind providence, I wanted nothing. Another Preacher being sent into the old circuit, I had my full scope in the new one. Things turned out beyond my expectations. The Lord blessed the word. I several times visited the Societies in *Gower*, which I joined the year before; for the other preacher had not time. I endured a good deal of hardship and danger in passing and repassing from *Gower* to *Pembrokeshire*, in winter; there being several dangerous waters to cross.

Sometimes

Sometimes a stranger is surrounded by the tides, whilst he is crossing the sands, and knows nothing of the matter, till he find himself hemmed in on every side. This I once narrowly escaped. I had once a pretty long day's journey, when coming to one of the ferries, which is a mile over, I found the boat was broke. I had nine miles to ride up to *Carmarthen*, where the bridge was, and nine miles on the other side back again; this added eighteen miles to my journey. I just got over the last ferry in the evening; but which was my road I knew not, and the people could not or would not speak English. But they pointed me up a dark lane, which at length brought me to a wild mountain. It being quite dark, I knew not which way to go; for there was no road. At length my mare sunk down in a bog and stuck fast. Here I was at a loss what to do; for if I left her it was ten to one if I should find her again. As I knew not which way to go for help, I shouted and hollowed till I was weary; but to no purpose. I pitied the poor creature, that after so long and fatiguing a journey, had such a stable at night. After some time I took hold of the bridle, and pulled her head; being strong, she made a vigorous struggle, and got her fore-parts above ground, and after taking breath made another stout spring, and got entirely free. At this I was not a little glad; but not knowing the ground, I judged it safest to lead her after me. I was weary, cold, and hungry, and where or when my journey should end I knew not. At length I discovered something like a house, at which I was not a little glad; but my joy was soon over; for making up to it, I found it an old ruin uninhabited; so my poor, weary companion and I set out again. At last, I saw a man, and prevailed upon him for sixpence to shew me the way from the common, which was not a
quarter

quarter of a mile; for it happened I had come the direct road. But when I came to the place I aimed at, some time in the night, there was nothing to eat, for either man or horse. I got the poor beast to a farm-house at some distance. My lodging was but indifferent, but yet very agreeable, and I knew not that either I or my beast ailed any thing after we got into good quarters.

The Lord prospered my undertaking in *Pembrokeshire*; so that by Christmas I had eight or nine Societies. And as the people were remarkably loving, my time went on comfortably. 'Tis true, I often met with things not agreeable, for I was continually ranging about to beat up fresh ground, and *Wales*, is not the most pleasing part of the world for a stranger to wander in; especially on the errand which I was upon. But I cared very little about the matter, provided I see some fruit of my labour. I could rest very well upon straw, when needful, and be well content.

A little before the Conference, I went to *Tenby*, which had held out stoutly for their master, and boasted no Preachers had ever come there, neither should they but at the price of their lives. I was determined to make the attempt: So a few friends accompanied me one Sunday morning from *Pembroke*. We arrived there by eight o'clock, and after putting up our horses, went to the cross. I gave out the hundredth psalm: The people flocked together amain, and all behaved very well. After singing I prayed without interruption. I then gave out my text, and all was quite still. By and by I observed a person, with an air of importance, walking up and down, who, I soon learned, was the Mayor. He would fain have got some one to pull me down, but all the people stood staring with

with their mouths and eyes open, as if they would have devoured every word. Finding the town's people took no notice of him, he addressed a company of sailors who stood by themselves; desiring they would take that fellow down. But the honest tars answered in their own stile, "The devil shall take him down for us." He then fetched out the Riot Act, and came into the midst of the crowd to read it; so I ceased speaking until he concluded. I asked him if he had done reading? He said he had. Well, then, said I, I will begin again; so I went on and concluded in peace. After sermon the Constables came to fetch me before the Mayor. When I came I found the Rector, the Curate, and the Town-Clerk there. Mr. Mayor insisted I had been making a riot: I denied the charge, and desired him to prove it. He said, he would not stand proving the matter with me; but, says he, "Shew your authority, or to prison you shall go." I told him, "I have been preaching, and have licence so to do," which I then produced. This being read, "These justices, said he, are Methodists every one of them." "Well, but is this all you have to shew!" I answered, Yes; then said he you must go to prison. Let his *mittimus* be made out." For which purpose, pen, ink and paper were brought. But he was informed there was an Act of Toleration: This was produced; in which it was asserted, that a qualified preacher might preach in either house, field or other place. This seemed to puzzle Mr. Mayor a little; and he thought it best to dismiss me, on condition that nothing of the kind might be attempted again. I told him, I intended to preach again at two o'clock, which I did to well nigh all the town, and had no interruption. I went again that day fortnight, and preached three times, and had very large congregations each time.

Presently

Presently after, I left the country, and must confess I cannot help blaming those who came after me, for not following the blow. I was much importuned to stay in the country. However, I tore myself from them, and hastened to the London Conference.

From thence I was appointed for *Castlebar*, in *Ireland*, and made the best of my way thither. As I sailed up *Bristol* Channel, I looked with a wishful eye to *Pembrokeshire*; and if I could have got on shore, I should have been tempted to stay with them. But we stretched over for *Dublin*; and from thence I went to *Castlebar*. Here I found myself not only in another country, but amongst another sort of people. Instead of having crowds following me, as in *Pembrokeshire*, I was shut up in a little dark corner, and had but three little congregations in the Circuit; and being entirely surrounded by Papists, there was no probability of enlarging my sphere of action; for they neither understood English, nor durst they come to hear if they had been ever so desirous. Here I was warmer than wise, in my zeal against the Papists; and had it not been for three troops of dragoons who lay in the town, and were constant hearers, I know not but I should have paid for my *rashness*.

Finding I could not enlarge my bounds of preaching, I determined to improve my little learning. I did not like to be at the mercy of every pretender, with regard to the original Scriptures, and was much excited to aim at a little more knowledge by Mr. *Wesley* to the Clergy. I saw every reason assigned for their knowing Greek and Hebrew, was doubly applicable to me. Indeed it was my desire, from the time of my first engaging in the work of God, to shew myself approved unto
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God, a workman, that needed not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Very providentially, there was a grammar-school in *Castlebar*, in which some Gentlemen's sons were instructed in the learned languages. The Master very freely assisted me; so that I preached night and morning, devoted the forenoon to study, and spent the afternoon in visiting the sick, and reading English; and the evening I spent with my friendly School-master. This has proved very useful to me ever since. Some good was done during my stay here; the numbers in societies were a little increased, and the congregations much enlarged.

From hence I removed into the *Athlone* Circuit. I still attended unto my studies, but had not the same opportunities as before. I here got a sore illness by lying in a damp bed *, so that my speech and hearing were well nigh taken from me. But this was a necessary visitation, and what my carelessness deserved. However, when I was able, I preached abroad in most of the towns, and I hope not in vain: Though I did not live so near to God as I ought to have done.

My next remove was to *Corke*. Here a blessed work was begun under that indefatigable servant of God, Mr. *Pennington*. It did not decrease during my stay, but increased more abundantly. I preached abroad in every part of the town. Prayer-meetings were regularly kept up. I met the Class-leaders every Saturday night, and appointed each his work for the ensuing week. Strict discipline was observed: Not a Class-leader or Steward was per-

* This I believe has been the death of several of the Preachers, and yet how few of the people are careful in this point?

mitted to enter the Society, without producing his ticket : And the work of the Lord prospered on every side. In this agreeable manner things went on, when Mr. *James Morgan* came to help me. He was the older Preacher, though the care of things was committed to me. I could soon see a party gathering against me, who did not like that strictness of discipline. At length he insisted on a person's being admitted to the Love-feasts and Society-meetings who would not meet in Class ; this I could not admit of. I insisted on poor and rich meeting in Class, or not having any privilege of meeting in Society. Letters were sent to Mr. *Wesley*, and his answers were construed in their favour. However, I stood to what I saw was right. They then alledged, her husband would not let her meet in Class. To cut off this pretence, I went and asked him if he did hinder her ? His answer was, She is at her own liberty : Then Mr. M. was obliged to submit. This, however, caused a shyness betwixt Mr. M. and myself, which cast a damp upon the work. Yet I kept up, at all events, the same discipline as long as I stayed at *Cork*.

At the beginning of the year 1765, I removed to *Limerick*, and in July I came over to *England*, to the *Manchester* Conference. After seeing some of my relations in *Yorkshire*, I set out for *Scotland*. Resting on the Sunday at *Dumfries*, I preached in the Ball-room, the day being rainy, so that I could not preach out of doors. Here I was much importuned to stay ; but my destination was to *Glasgow*. When I arrived, I entered on a scene I had never done before. The winter was at hand, I was in a strange land ; no Society ; no place of entertainment ; no place to preach in ; no friend to communicate my mind to. I took a private lodging, and gave out, that I should preach on the green, a place of public resort, hard by the town. A table

was

was carried to the place, and at the appointed time I went and found two baker's boys and two old women waiting. My very foul funk within me. I had travelled by land and by water near six hundred miles to this place; and behold my congregation! Well, I turned upon my heel to go away: No one can tell but they who have experienced it, what a task it is to stand out in the open air, to preach to no body! More especially in such a place as *Glasgow*. However, at length I mounted my table, and began to sing, which I had entirely to myself. A few more kept creeping together, all seemingly very poor people, till at length I had about two hundred hearers. But this was poor encouragement. The night following, I had a more promising congregation; yet nothing to what I expected. The third night we had heavy rain: This quite cast me down again. Oh, what a day of distress was that! I had not learned in all states to be content. The enemy assaulted me sorely, so that I was ready to cry out, "it is better for me to die than to live." But God pitied my weakness; the next day cleared up, and I was never prevented from preaching out of doors for eleven or twelve weeks after. On the Saturday evening I had a large congregation, and on Sunday morning a larger; but such a one on Sunday evening, as I do not remember ever seeing before. I mounted my table but was quite too low. I set a chair upon it, but was quite too low still; I then mounted upon a high wall, and cried aloud, *The hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.* All was still as night, so that I conceived great hopes of this opportunity: But when I had done, they made a lane for me to walk through the huge multitude, while they stood staring at me; but no one said, Where dwellest thou? I walked home much de-

jected. One great obstacle was, a new edition of the Eleven Letters, ascribed to Mr. *Hervey*, was just come out, prefaced by a Minister in *Edinburgh*, a man much esteemed in *Scotland*. These letters fully answered their design. They carried gall and wormwood wherever they came. So that it was a sufficient reason for every one to keep their distance because I was connected with Mr. *Wesley*. I laboured to keep as clear as possible of controversy, dwelling chiefly upon Repentance, Faith, and the New-birth. Indeed, as I then leaned much both to imputed righteousness and final perseverance, I had no temptation to bring in controversy.

I soon found that persons may easily learn to cover several gospel topics; such as original sin, the offices of Christ, his being the only Saviour, and the like; and yet, be haughty, self-sufficient, unbroken-hearted sinners. This I saw, and levelled all my powers against it. I soon found their pharisaic hearts could not stand it. Hence I drew their resentment upon me, and plenty of lies and calumnies were soon spread abroad.

I continued preaching night and morning, when opportunity offered; and tried much to procure a place to preach in, as the winter was now come on. I believe I was disappointed in ten or twelve different places. I sold my horse, and a Preacher who passed through *Glasgow*, to *Ireland*, having his horse lamed, and little money left, I spared about three guineas to help him on his way. This brought my stock into a small compass; and having every thing to pay for, I was reduced to a short allowance. I paid three shillings per week for my room, fire, and attendance; but I really kept a very poor house. I never kept so many fast-days, either before or since. But how to keep up my credit was a difficulty, for

I was afraid my landlady would think me either poor or covetous ; I frequently desired her not to provide any thing for dinner, and a little before noon, I dressed myself, and walked out, till after dinner, and then came home to my hungry room, with a hungry belly. However, she thought I had dined out some where ; so I saved my credit.

About this time a poor man was executed for the murder of his wife ; I attended him several weeks in the prison, and likewise at his execution, which had a circumstance I never saw before ; they chopped off his right-hand, before his execution, with a great axe, just as a butcher would chop a piece of beef with a cleaver. As I had reason to believe the Lord had plucked him as a brand from the burning, I published a short account of his case. It is amazing what a cry this raised up against me, to say that God had mercy on such a sinner ! Papers were cried up and down the streets against me, filled with lies of all sorts. Nay, so zealous was some poor creature, that he began publishing weekly numbers, and had no better subject than myself. My case was now deplorable ; I had famine within doors, and plenty of reproach without. And yet I might have prevented it all ; for just at this time there was an elegant place of worship building, called *A Kirk of Relief*. Formerly the inhabitants of *Scotland* had the privilege of choosing their own Ministers ; this privilege they are now debarred of, and the gift of a living lies in the hands of a patron. But frequently the parishioners unite, build a place of worship, and call a Minister themselves ; leaving the old kirk to the patron and his friend. This was the case in *Glasgow* ; the church was built, but they had not chosen their Minister. One of their leading men was one of my greatest intimates. He said, he would engage me three hundred votes, which

which would be a majority. This was an alluring bait, considering my present circumstances ; a place of one hundred and forty pounds per annum, with honour and credit, on one hand, and hunger and contempt on the other. But I thought it would be betraying the trust which was reposed in me. Afterwards some of that party desired a meeting with me ; but I so satisfied them, that I heard no more from that quarter. At length I procured a place to preach in, and my hearers furnished it with a pulpit and seats. I saw now a little fruit of my labour : As I had a place to preach in, and a little Society, which kept continually increasing ; some of whom stand to this day, while others are gone to rest.

I observed above, how kind Providence was in the weather ; for though it was a remarkable wet season, yet I never was but once prevented preaching abroad till the middle of November, and which was then only one night : so that it became a kind of proverb among the people. “ If it rains all day, it will be fair at night for the *load*, i. e. the lad, to preach on the green.” One little circumstance I cannot omit. Some time after my arrival at *Glasgow*, I found myself at a loss for singing, having but a poor voice. And as the people knew nothing of our hymns, I was obliged to sing the Scotch psalms ; yet being frequently at a loss, one of my hearers told me, if I pleased, he would be my Precentor, that is, my Clerk, to lead off the psalms. At this I was glad ; so we went on pretty well : but at length he made a demand of thirteen shillings and four-pence for his work, which was just four-pence a time. This did but ill suit my circumstances. However, I paid him his demand, and dismissed him and the Scotch psalms together. I now began to sing our own hymns ; the people
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liked them right well, and in a little time, I taught them to sing several of our tunes.

After the Society was increased to forty or fifty, some of them began to inquire how I was maintained? They asked me if I had not an estate; or some supplies from *England*? I told them I had neither; but having sold my horse, I had made what little I had go as far as I could. I then explained our custom to them. I told them of the little matter we usually received from our people. The poor, dear souls were much affected, and they very liberally supplied my wants, as also those that came after me. I stayed with them till the middle of April, and then bid them an affectionate farewell; leaving about seventy persons joined together. Though I had many trials in *Glasgow*, yet I had much opportunity to pursue my study; and the privilege of perusing the College library was of singular advantage to me. But I own I did not live so near to God, the latter part of my time, as I did in the beginning. I seldom enlarge my acquaintance, but I find it enlarges my temptations; so I found cause to cry out, Lord, pardon my trifling, and want of deep seriousness!

From hence I went to *Edinburgh*, and in my way turned aside to *Stirling*, where I spent three nights. On the Sunday, preaching under the side of an old uninhabited building, some young men got into the inside, and going up stairs, threw off a number of the slates; but though they fell just by me, I was not hurt, nor any one else. Leaving *Stirling*, I came to *Edinburgh*, where the brethren received me gladly. The Octagon was not quite finished, but the congregation was miserably small. Several things had concurred to reduce both the Society and the congregation, particularly the afore-mentioned

tioned letters. I had soon the pleasure of seeing the congregation increase, yet not as I could wish; the place was never above half filled, even on Sunday evenings. I was therefore determined to take a new step. The *Castle-hill* being the place of general rendezvous of all sorts of people, after they come out of the churches, about twelve o'clock: I was determined to preach there just at that time: It was something disagreeable to stand up bare-headed in the blazing sun; but this I regarded not. My method was to preach in the Octagon in the morning, on the *Castle-hill* at noon, in the High School-Yard at four o'clock, and in the Octagon at Six in the evening. As I generally spake with all my might, this was rather too hard for my constitution. However, by this means, I got the Octagon well filled on a Sunday evening, and helped the Society a little. In order to establish Societies betwixt *Edinburgh* and *Glasgow*, I preached in several towns which lie between, such as *Burrowsounness*, *Linlithgow*, *Falkirk*, and *Killsyth*; but I fear, with little fruit.

In October, I left my much-esteemed friends at *Edinburgh*, and removed to *Aberdeen*. In crossing the *Forth*, which is seven miles from *Leith* to *Kinghorn*, I know not that I was ever nearer being drowned. There were several friends from *Edinburgh*, and it being an exceeding fine calm morning, the regular passage-boat being gone, we had a small pinnace; but when we were about half way over, such a sudden squall of wind arose, that we were in danger of being over-set every minute. But by a merciful providence we got safe over. At *Aberdeen*, I met with a loving people; but as the winter was at hand, I had no opportunity of enlarging my sphere of action. I was therefore determined to apply myself to study, and to live
nearer

nearer to God than I had done. But a family residing in *Aberdeen*, which came from *Leeds*, I immediately contracted an acquaintance with them; and this led me into company, which was a great loss to my soul. After I had spent some time, being fully convinced of my danger, I judged it best to flee. And a ship being ready to sail for *Leith*, I went on board immediately, taking an abrupt leave. Having scarce any wind, we had a very tedious passage, as we could but make little way; but I never was with such a ship's company before. Every one on board, both sailors and passengers, came upon deck to prayers, and all kneeled down, except the man at the helm. After a slow passage we reached *Leith*. I hastened to *Edinburgh*, anxious to see my friends; the generality of whom were glad to see me.

As soon as the season would permit, Mr. *Oliver*, being my colleague, we took our station on the *Castle-hill*, hoping for the same success which I had the last summer. But a circumstance happened which hindered the usefulness of me and my fellow-labourer.

There had been, a few years before, a young man in that College, who met in our Society. He appeared to be much alive to God, and was the leader of one of the Classes. He had been in *England* for some time, had got ordained, turned Predestinarian, and affected a popular character. He now came to *Edinburgh*, partly to do us harm, and partly for another purpose. In the latter design he failed; but in the former he was too successful. He would not preach in our place, nor even come to hear us: But preached at our usual times; and by this means drew away much people from us. There was neither matter nor method in his preaching; but

but it was loud and quaint ; so he was much admired. It has fared with him as it has done with several others. He first turned Calvinist, and then to nothing. It is plain, a man with little parts, and little religion, may do that harm in a small time, which men of far greater parts and deeper religion cannot repair in a long time. For though my colleague, who was a man of good abilities, and did all in his power, as well as myself, yet could we not either prevent or remove the harm which one shallow young man was doing.

My next remove was to *Chester*, where a change took place of such consequence to me, that I should be much wanting in my gratitude to a kind Providence if I passed it over in silence. I found it was expedient for me to marry, but it appeared a matter of great consequence. Only two things in all my life had given me greater concern, namely, my acceptance with God, and my call to preach. What I wanted was, a person of grace, of good understanding, of a good natural disposition (for my own is violent,) and one who had been well educated. I had contracted an acquaintance with one while in the city of *Corke*, in whom I had reason to believe the above properties met ; she was descended from an eminent French Protestant family, whose grandfather, among many others, had fled from the rage of Lewis XIV. and had left his estate behind, only taking what effects he could along with him. She was early bereaved of her father, and not long after of her mother. My great objection was, the bringing a person of her delicate constitution and education into such a way of life, as she must expect if she became my wife. This I feared would be more than her spirits could bear. Besides, I found a great aversion to bring any more burdens upon the Societies ; for as she was left an orphan,

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her affairs were very ill managed, yet, believing it to be the will of God, I at length ventured upon this important step; for which I have abundant reason to bless God, and hope I shall do it for ever.

Before the end of the year, I preached one Sunday morning in the Market-Place at *Salop*, and met with no other molestation than a few clods and small stones. So I gave notice that I would preach again in the evening, at a place called the *Quarry*. When I drew near the place, there was a little army gathered together with stakes or clubs. They did not stay till I came to the place; but came on furiously, so that I was soon hemmed in on every side. They seemed a little at a stand, when I demanded to know what they wanted? However they rallied, and though they did not *strike* me, they *kicked* me about to some purpose. By degrees they hurried me up to the door of a house which belonged to a Justice of Peace. I thought there might be something providential in this; and took the liberty of going to desire his protection. The Justice was at the coffee-house, but I sent for him; the mob by this time had filled the street, and were roaring like lions. At length the Justice came. He said, "Tell me who have hurt you? And I will send for a warrant for them;" and after a little incoherent talk, fairly shoved me out of doors, into the midst of the mob. Providence held them from striking, or a very few blows might have ended the business. I likewise kept on my feet, for if I had once been down, there was no likelihood I should have risen again. But I was covered with dirt from head to foot. All the filth they could scrape up was thrown, and when I attempted turning away my face on one side, I met it on the other. Which way to go I knew not, nor indeed could I go any way, but just
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as my masters drove me. At length I heard some cry out, "for shame, for shame;" this occasioned a quarrel among themselves. Mean time, an honest man opened his door: so I slipped in, and went out by a back way, not much hurt, but dreadfully bedaubed; so that I really "needed much washing to be touched."

The next year the Society in *Dublin* being in much confusion, Mr. *Wesley* desired me to go thither. My affectionate partner was in a very unfit situation for crossing the water. When we got there, I was in great hopes for several weeks, the desired end would be accomplished. But my former antagonist coming to *Dublin*, who had been the occasion of the confusion, I had all my work to do over again. But he is gone, and I hope to Paradise. There I shall leave him; but he occasioned my path to be very rough in *Dublin* *.

While we were there, my Wife was delivered of her first child; and not being skilfully treated, she had such a complaint in her breast as was supposed to be a confirmed cancer. The anguish which I saw her daily in was such an affliction to me, as I never experienced before. This continued nine months, during which, every means was tried which could be devised. At length, partly by a very abstemious diet, partly by taking quicksilver, with the application of boiled hemlock outwardly, through the blessing of God, a perfect cure was effected. But before this we removed to *Corke*, leaving our infant above an hundred miles from

* Though it was my misfortune not to agree with Mr. Morgan; yet there were many excellent things in him, such as I wish to imitate; and my reason for mentioning the above, is to caution myself and others against discord.

us ; but though the nurse was a Papist, I have reason to believe she did her duty to the child.

I found *Corke* was not as I had left it, about four years ago. Then every thing appeared lively : now, alas ! all was dull and languid, the prayer-meetings were dropped, discipline was not kept up, and the Society was much decayed. I laboured with my might to revive the former flame ; but, how hard is it to regain the ground which is lost !

A little before I left *Corke*, I was at *Bandon* one Sunday. It happened there was to be a review on the Monday, of a regiment of light-horse. While I was preaching, Colonel *Walpole*, and all the Officers came, and behaved in a most indecent manner. On my speaking to them, the Colonel ordered four trumpeters from the barracks, into the middle of the congregation, and commanded them to sound. I gave out " Praise God," &c. and when it was sung, began again ; so that the poor trumpeters sounded till they were black in the face, and at last were fairly worn out. This so enraged the Colonel, that he even foamed with rage and blasphemies, and I expected every moment his cane would have been laid upon the poor men's heads. However, at last, they all retreated, and got little but shame for their trouble. As the Colonel was in liquor, I took the liberty to send him a few lines the next morning, and was told he said, he would not be guilty of such an indiscretion again for twenty pounds. But as I was preaching in the market-house the next night, the Officers came again. They stood awhile pretty attentive, and then broke out into horrid blasphemies, and were for forcing their way through the people to pull me down. But a pretty large number, chiefly old women, violently engaged them, and gained a
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complete victory : So that I was left in peaceable possession of the field, and finished my discourse quietly. The history of this engagement was published in the *Freeman's Journal*, and sent all over the kingdom.

In July, I left *Corke*, and set out for *England*, taking *Dublin* in the way. We embarked there in a small cutter for *Liverpool*, taking our little child with us. After we had got out at sea, there fell a dead calm ; so that we could not move forward at all. Our provisions fell short. As for my wife, she being sick, could eat nothing ; and as for myself, I was not anxious. But I felt for the poor child, only seventeen months old. We had only a little very bad bread, and some stinking water ; but the patient little creature would take a morsel of the bread, and drink a little of that water, and so lie down again quite content. The vessel was full of the most abandoned clowns, chiefly new recruits ; so that their oaths and low-lived obscene jests made it a kind of a floating-hell.

We spent the Sabbath at *Liverpool*, where I preached to a large congregation out of doors. From thence we went to *Chester*, where we spent two or three comfortable days ; and so on to *Manchester*, the place of my destination for the year. I was glad that I was in *England* again ; where I expected to find genuine religion. I found my diligent and indefatigable predecessor, Mr. *Mather*, had done all that a laborious man could do to put the Circuit into order, excepting that he had left a family in the Preacher's house, which neither suited with them nor us. Indeed the house wanted furnishing ; but every thing needful was easily granted. I have much reason to acknowledge the kindness of that people ; for I was more expensive

to them than I have been to any Circuit before or since. Yet every thing was done without grudging. Here my dear partner had a long and dangerous fever ; but no assistance was wanting, and all expences were cheerfully paid. They did the same when she lay-in ; so that I had no weight or care on that head. Here I spent two comfortable years, and had the satisfaction to see some fruit of my labour ; especially the latter year. My two years being expired, I left this agreeable Circuit with much regret. I came into the *Birstal* Circuit, expecting I was going into the land of *Goshen*. But, oh, the amazing difference ! There was a general dullness ; no discipline, and scarce one Class met well ; I scarce ever came in so dreary a region. Their singing indicated the condition they were in : For the few that did sing, sung as if they were half asleep. The congregations were so shrunk at *Birstal*, that they preached on a Thursday evening in the kitchen, and had plenty of room. The house was in great want of necessaries ; for there was not one decent thing in it. It was highly necessary, if possible, to awaken the people. I began at *Birstal*, and so proceeded ; but I soon found my head in hot water. When I wanted things a little more decent in the dwelling-house, the Circuit echoed from side to side, with my pride and lordliness ; and a world of ill-natured things were said, which made my way very troublesome. One cause of which was, I thought it my duty to keep close to my study, except when preaching, visiting the sick, &c. or other necessary business called me out. This was construed into pride and stateliness. I think, for the first half year, I never had such a time in my life. It was intimated to me, several times, that my fellow-labourers helped on the discontent in an under-hand way. How this may be, was best known to themselves ; but it was a heavy time

time to me. However, being sensible I was doing my duty, I determined to continue the same conduct, rather than alter my plan, I would chuse to leave the Circuit. Towards the latter end of the year, great numbers began to have a more favourable idea of my conduct; they believed I acted from principle, and God owned my poor labours. However, prejudice continued in many to the last, and when the Conference drew on, I found a private cabal had formed a letter or two against me, in which my pride and niceness were not forgot, and several surmises added, as if I was a Calvinist, and an enemy to the Church. They had their desire, and I had the happiness of being removed to *Bradford*. My last year's treatment had left a foreboding upon my mind; but it was soon healed by a kind people. I did not find much life amongst them at first; but whatever I said was well received; my fellow-labourers also joined hand in hand, so that the work of God greatly revived! This year I was visited with a fever, but found God very present and precious, so that this also was for my good. The second year we had a blessed outpouring of the Spirit; believers daily were multiplying, so that during these two years, above six hundred souls were joined, and many, nay most of them, continue to this day. Great numbers were likewise renewed in love, and enabled to rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in every thing give thanks.

My next remove was to *Kighley*. This Circuit was a mere scarecrow on various occasions; so that I entered into it with little less than horror. There was a family in the Preaching-house, which I was obliged to remove. The house was to furnish, and put into repair; and I had to beg the money up and down, which is not pleasing work.

The Circuit was a large rambling range. I was to be but three or four days at *Kighley* in six weeks; and many of the congregations were very small; all which were compleatly disagreeable circumstances. However, I entered upon my work in the best manner I could. I soon got the house put into good repair, and well furnished; so that my family were comfortably situated. God likewise revived his work in many places, so that between four and five hundred were joined during the year; and the greater part were able to give a reason of the hope that was in them. A little before the Conference, having to preach one Sunday evening at *Padiham*, the house was by far too small for the congregation. It being a fine evening, we chose a convenient place to preach on out of doors. While I was preaching to a large congregation, the Minister came at the head of a mob, in his gown and cassock, and dragged me down: As soon as I could, I mounted again, and again was jostled down. I attempted standing up a third time, but to no purpose; so we adjourned to the Preaching-house.

At the end of the year, the Circuit was divided into two as compleat rounds as most in the kingdom. After spending a second year at *Kighley*, I removed to *Wednesbury* in *Staffordshire*, where I had the less hopes of doing good, because my predecessor had done all that I could do in any respect. I found the house bare of furniture, the Circuit poor, and trade bad; so that it was hard to put things in order. However, I set about it, and got my design compleated in that respect. But still, the great business gave me much uneasiness; the Societies were dull, and the congregations miserably small. Calvinism, Antinomianism, and downright Rantism, had so laid waste this country, that there were small hopes of doing much good. My very
soul

soul sunk within me, so that at times it seemed as if I must faint. I cannot tell how they get their time over, who can drag on and see no fruit. Were that my case, I should be ready to conclude, that I was out of my place. To me this was a bitter and a trying season, going round and round, and seeing no good effect. However, when the new year came in, God revived his work; the preaching abroad in the latter end of the summer, had excited many to come and hear. By hearing they were convinced, and many were brought to the knowledge of the love of God. I think near two hundred were this year added to the Societies.

After the next Conference I was appointed for *Birfal* Circuit, into which I came with fear and trembling, remembering the days of old. As my worthy predecessor had been much blessed among the people, and was much esteemed by them, it made my entrance the more difficult. He had much improved the dwelling-house, and had regulated several things, so that all who come after him will reap the fruit of his labour. I endeavoured to compleat what he had left undone. There had been a blessed work in *Birfal*, where many were suddenly brought in; but the fire had not spread much farther. And as these were young converts, and not established, I feared we should have a sad falling away. But this was not the case; some few dropt off, and but a few. On the other hand, the awakening spread into most of the Societies; so that I scarce ever saw so extensive a work. We joined above seven hundred this year, and the greater part alive to God. I never knew so simple means made use of, in the hand of a gracious God, to bring sinners to himself. Prayer-meetings were singularly useful, and so was the preaching; but thunder and lightning, dreams and visions,

sions, singing and praying, were all made use of for the awakening of sinners *. I am now returned into that Circuit, and what Providence has yet to do in me or by me, I cannot tell. But here I am, a monument of amazing mercy, willing to lie in his blessed hands as clay in the hands of the Great Potter, so that I may in all things be a vessel meet for my dear Lord's service; wishing only to finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received from him.

* This year being attended with much unction of the Spirit in the Circuit, by bringing many poor wanderers to the fold of the True Shepherd, I had some pretty sharp trials to grapple with; in some private affairs, among other things, I had a fine boy seized with fits in a violent manner; for one whole day he had them almost without intermission; for no sooner did he recover from one, but another seized him. I was several times fetched home as supposing he was dying. One time being fetched home near twenty miles off, on the same mournful occasion, and riding pretty sharply upon a high causeway, and a hollow road on my left hand, my horse took fright at something, turned round, and tumbled down into the hollow way, and fell upon me; the man who was with me attempting to dismount his horse too hastily, his foot hung fast in the stirrup, and could not come to my assistance, only his horse was quiet and stood still, or his case might have been very bad. In the mean time, my horse lay upon me as if he were dead; and it was well he did so; for had he attempted to rise or struggled with his fore feet, he would have struck me even in the face, and might have killed me on the spot. I thought one of my legs was broke in pieces, as it lay under the horse upon a stone. However, with hard struggling, I got myself from under, and after the numbness was gone, I found I could stand, though pretty much crushed. However, one circumstance upon another began to impress my mind with some very uneasy sensations, which gave me pain; but riding in a lonely place, I saw a strip of clean paper lying on the ground, curiosity led me to alight and see what it was. The words written were verbatim thus: *The love of Christ is a correcting love; whom he loveth he chasteneth, and correcteth every son whom he receiveth.* This was really a word in season, a sweet reviving cordial, and I know not that my mind has ever been so harrassed since. By what hand the bit of paper was dropped, I cannot tell, but the hand of a kind Providence directed it to me.

Before

Before I close this narration, there are two things which, in gratitude to my God, I cannot omit.

I mentioned before, how desirous I was of improving myself in the original languages. After I had made some progress in Greek, having gone through the Greek Testament, and two or three of the classic authors in that language, I wanted to get acquaintance with Hebrew. I procured several books; but they did not answer my purpose: Likewise while I was in *Edinburgh*, I employed a Jew, a professed Teacher of Hebrew, at an extravagant rate, but I soon found he was utterly insufficient for what he undertook, as he knew nothing of the grammar; so that his teaching was a mere imposition. I began to despair of attaining it, when *Robinson's* Key came in my way, by which I readily went through the psalms. I procured his *Manipulus Linguae Sanctæ*, and by the assistance of that, with *Buxtorf's* Lexicon, I can read my Hebrew Bible with pleasure. By having a particular method of spending my time, I have found it of the utmost importance. Hereby I save much time, and it is likewise a means of stirring me up. It is true, I have little time for chit chat, which has occasioned me many inconveniencies. Some have thought me very proud and reserved, because I would not (as they call it) be free: That is, I would not sit and chatter with them for hours; tell them a great number of little adventures which I had met with. I dare not do it; I deem it quite impertinent, and in no wise calculated to edify.

My method of spending my time is this. The time before breakfast is wholly devoted to my Hebrew Bible, comparing the original text with the Latin and English translations; I did, for sometime carry about with me the Septuagint translation,
but

but finding it to be so wide of the Hebrew, I have laid it aside, only consulting it occasionally.

After breakfast, I write, or read in some Latin author, till it is time to take horse. If I do not ride, I visit the sick, and others, till dinner. After dinner I generally read divinity, history, geography, or philosophy, till five; and then spend some time in my Greek Testament, and considering the subject I shall preach from that evening. After preaching and Society-meeting, I spend the little remains of the evening in friendly conversation with such as happen to be present, till I retire. I then note down what has occurred in the day, and commit myself into the hands of a gracious God. This is my general manner of spending my time; but I find a good deal of difficulty in keeping to it. Sometimes I want convenient retirement; so that I am obliged to pursue my study in the midst of children, noise and confusion *.

There is a gross error which some of our people labour under, that we are not to premeditate on what we are to preach; that God is to assist us in an extraordinary manner, and that all study and meditation is taking the matter out of his hands. Such a notion serves to patronize a sluggish, lounging temper: and is evidently productive of confusion, rhapsody, and nonsense. Indeed, if any one comes to me for advice, or in distress of mind, I directly lay aside every thing else, and apply myself wholly to their case; but otherwise I keep to my regular plan. I wonder every Preacher does not keep something of a daily journal; more especially

* The sole reason for inserting this, is wishing to stir up some of my brethren to redeem their time; and what may seem a reflection in the preceding narrative, is but applicable to very few. My brethren in the gospel I esteem above all men.

of what passes in his own mind. This I have found so useful, that I repent I did not adopt it sooner.

The other circumstance which I cannot omit, is, my commencing what is called an Arminian. I observed above, that my first religious acquaintance were Calvinists, some of whom had been joined among the Methodists; from these I received such accounts as gave me a prejudice against them. I likewise read little else but Calvinian authors, and was much delighted with what is called moderate Calvinism. Indeed there is one branch of Calvinism reprobation, what Mr. *Fletcher* calls its left-leg, which I never could cordially embrace. But still I hung in suspense, till I read over Mr. *Wesley's* Predestination calmly considered. Then I bid a final adieu to the damning of infants, and the consigning of unborn souls to hell: His Appeals likewise (which I heartily wish every person, not entirely drunk with prejudice, to read over and over) were of great service to me. I was now a kind of Baxterian, or rather Miltonian, for I saw first the scheme in *Paradise Lost*. But still I held fast by Calvinian Imputed Righteousness, and Calvinian Final Perseverance: I call them Calvinian, to distinguish them from Scriptural Imputed Righteousness, and Scriptural Perseverance. In this mongrel state I was, when Mr. *Wesley* published his Abridgement of *J. Goodwin* on Imputed Righteousness. I had never so much as heard of his name; and no wonder, for he was a condemned heretic among the Calvinists. This book I read, but I did not like it, as he was so unmerciful to my favourite scheme, so warmly set forth in my favourite author Mr. *Hervey*. However, after some time I determined to give him a fair reading, and that I might be thoroughly satisfied, I read him over twice. I saw the truth as clear as the shining sun.

I saw

I saw Calvinian Imputed Righteousness is downright Antinomianism. I still hung in suspense about final perseverance, and knew not which side of the question to take. The authors which I had been accustomed to read were all warm advocates for it, and brought such texts, with their comments upon them, as seemed unanswerable. But *Goodwin's* Redemption Redeemed fell into my hands; towards the latter end of which he considers the scriptures alledged, and the arguments brought, for Final Perseverance, and answers them in so masterly a manner, as has not left the shadow of a doubt upon my mind. So that I am firmly persuaded a man may make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience.

But though my own principles are fixt, yet I wish heartily, we could agree to grant each other liberty of conscience, as the King grants it to us all. There is no forcing of the understanding; the attempting of it has frequently lighted up the dreadful flames of persecution. I must confess, the ungenteel, unchristian, scurrilous treatment, with which Mr. *Wesley* has been treated by several of the opposite party, has given me a very unfavourable idea, both of them and the cause in which they are embarked. It seems to be the genuine spirit of the Synod of *Dort*, or rather, I may say, of Queen *Mary*, and Bishop *Bonner*. It is most certain, that giving of hard names, with a deal of low buffoonery, will never advance the cause of a meek and lowly Jesus.

T H E E N D.

